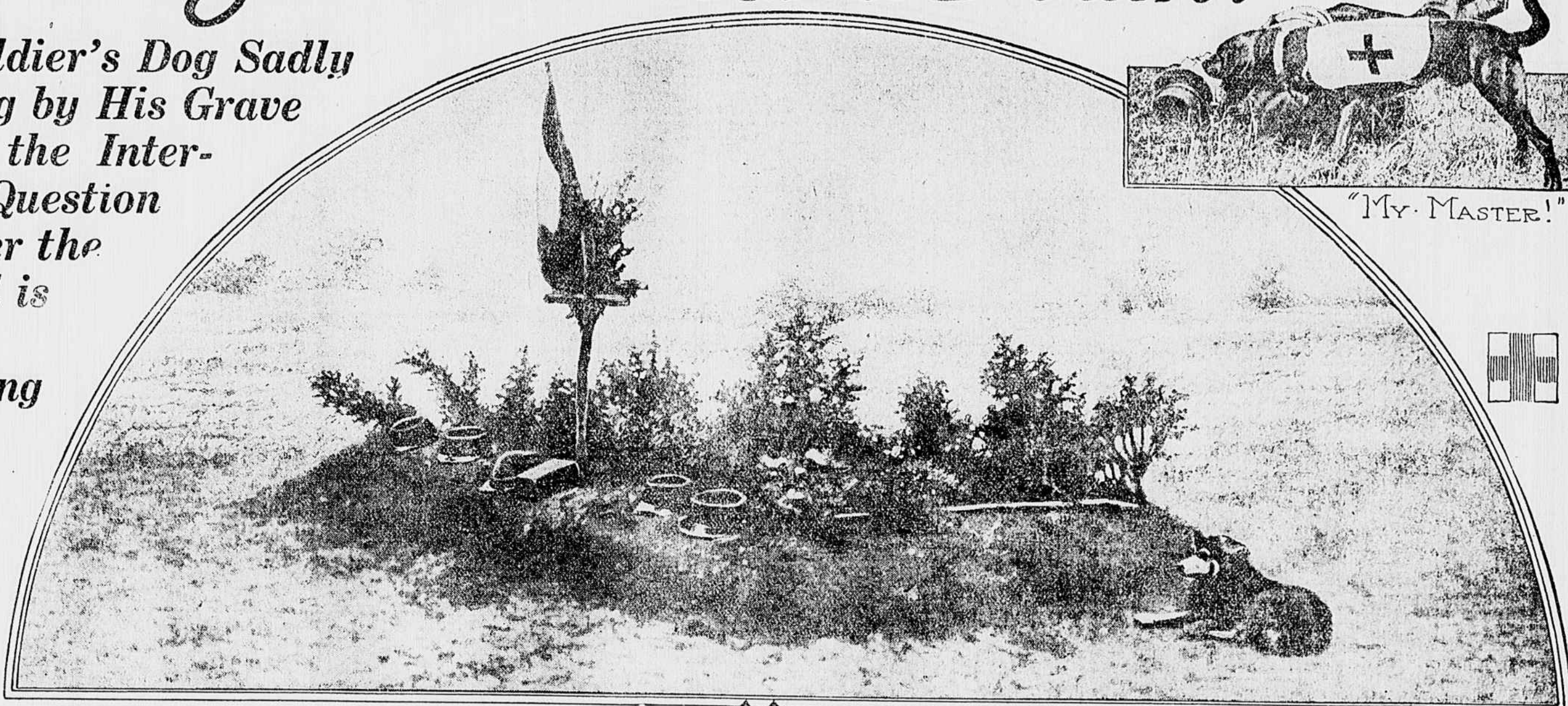


Do Dogs Understand Death?

The Soldier's Dog Sadly Waiting by His Grave Raises the Interesting Question Whether the Animal is Really Mourning or Expects His Master to Return and Feed Him



"MY MASTER!"



The Dog

By Miguel Zamacois, the Distinguished French Poet.
English Verse by Curtis Dunham.

"After the battle of Esternay a dog refused to leave the grave of the soldier who had rescued him."—*Paris Newspaper.*

ONE lonesome tomb the open field reveals:
No graven stone to passerby appeals.
No hero's name, no gallant deed enrolled,
No epitaph—a grave, all silent, cold;
And yet how eloquent the wordless signs
Upon that shelving turf! A dog reclines
Beneath a rustic cross, one mourning friend,
Devotion-stricken, faithful to the end.
A modest flag, tri-colored, flutters there,
And on the grassy mound with tender care
Are placed the caps of ten who sleep below.
What monument with phrases trite could show
More clearly what this precious grave contains,
Mute witness of a country's travail pains?
"Ten soldiers lie within one nameless grave
Who fought and died as one, one cause to save!"

Those soldiers' caps, the brave tricolor there!
One pauses, thrilled, abashed, his bowed head bare;
He grieves, yet glows with racial pride—
His race, his land, for which these ten have died!
One moment thus, and then the human note.
True sentiment is there; who now would quote,
"Dumb brute?" Who know what loving, poor dogs think?
Why waits this dog, refusing food and drink?
The diggers of this grave have dug and gone,
And comrades of these dead are fighting on;
The battle's roar o'erwhelms all sentiment—
Save to a dog who loves, and is content
To starve beside one buried soldier's cap.
The other nine are nought to him; mayhap
He sniffs at all, but only to be sure
Which is his Master's. Satisfied, secure
And constant to his trust, he starves and waits.

What does this poor dog think, who cannot tell
The longings of his grateful heart? "Tis well
His cap is here, or I'd be doing wrong
To think this sod could hold him down so long."
Those patient canine eyes expectant grow:
"A little longer yet—then to rejoice;
To feel his kindly hand, to hear his voice,
To eat from his hand only, leap upon
His sturdy chest, this bitter waiting done;
Reward him with a poor dog's very life.
Since life he saved for me amid the strife
Of man with man; to wait, to starve, to thirst,
Is little enough from me to him."

Who, versed
In love of dogs for those they choose to own
As masters, feels their need of speech? A moan,
A whine, a gladsome bark, a whimper here,
A caper there, devotion without fear,
Courage, patience—are not these enough?

The day is done, and in the twilight chill
The dog beside the cap is waiting still.
He shivers; ere the dawn his eyes will glaze
And when the sun dispels the chilling haze
He rays no more will warm this faithful friend
Of him whose cap he guarded to the end.

effect of blind, unreasoning love and grief.

How long will the dog stay over his master's grave? That depends on the dog. In some cases the animal is said to have stayed there until he died, while in others hunger or some other cause drives him away after a time.

Why should we suppose that the dog does not experience real grief and that he is merely waiting for his food? It can be proved that the dog has the most boundless and unselfish affection for a man. Therefore it follows that he must be capable of feeling grief. It is not reasonable to believe that an animal can feel strong affection and not feel the complementary emotion that the loss of the object of his affection must cause.

Many of the animal observers argue that the dog has stronger feelings of affection and grief than the average human being, although it is generally admitted that the most sensitive human beings, owing to their higher mental powers, are capable of greater depths of feeling. The dog, however, is almost invariably a very emotional creature, while great numbers of human beings are very slightly emotional.

Records show that the dog is capable

of the most deep and lasting affection, not only for human beings, but for other dogs and animals. It is a common experience to find a dog strongly attached to a horse and sometimes even to a cat. When a dog's devotion is concentrated on one of his own species it is not usually directed to one of the opposite sex. A superficial observer who imagines that human sentimentality is the noblest of qualities may think that this is an evidence of the dog's great inferiority to man, but more thoughtful observers argue that it is a mark of the dog's moral superiority.

The friends of the dog argue that in all the purely moral qualities, as theologians and philosophers have classed them, the dog proves himself fully equal to man, if not superior. Thus we find the dog exhibiting affection, devotion, unselfishness, courage and generosity in a great degree. If the dog's organism is so filled with these qualities it may be that there is not room for the cold reasoning powers.

Dogs have been used very largely by the French and Germans and other combatants for finding and helping the wounded. The services they have rendered in this way have been of great value. For instance, in going over a large battlefield the medical officers have often been unable to distinguish quickly

between the unconscious wounded and the dead. A trained dog will at once pick out the man who has the least trace of life left in him. This fact in itself is sufficient proof that the dog knows whether his master is dead or not. The dogs have also been very useful in relieving the wounded who have been left lying in places where they could not be rescued on account of the terrific fire to which the rescuers would be exposed. Poor fellows disabled in this way have been left in the open for days until they died from hunger and neglect. Dogs have been trained to carry food and drink to such cases.

Stories of the dog's devotion to man are nearly as old as the human race. As early as we find any traces of man we find traces of the dog sharing his dwelling and his occupations. In some mysterious way the dog was created with an overwhelming attachment to a different animal man.

In Homer's "Odyssey" we are told that the old dog was the only creature that recognized Odysseus when he returned home ragged and disguised after his long wanderings. Here we have an early record of a well established fact, the dog's ability to recognize a person more quickly than a man can do. One man bases his impressions of another on his clothes, his way of trimming his hair, his eyeglasses and other superficial things. The dog is able to recognize the true personality behind these superficial things.

One favorite ancient dog story is that of Bethgellert. According to Welsh leg-

end, Bethgellert belonged to Llewellyn, the heroic Welsh prince, who left the hound to care for his baby while he was out hunting. When Llewellyn came back late at night he found the dog with bloodstains about his mouth lying by an empty cradle. Rashly imagining that the dog had killed his child, Llewellyn slew the faithful animal with his sword. As the dying dog looked at him with reproachful eyes he found the baby lying unharmed among the curtains. The dog had acquired the bloodstains in fighting robbers who had tried to steal the child. It is a curious circumstance that al-

most the same story is found in Persian, Hindu and other ancient literature.

The defect of most of the ancient stories of dogs is that they interpret the dog's actions from the point of view of human motives and feelings. The new school of animal behaviorists endeavors to eliminate this human factor as far as possible, and keep an impartial record of the intelligence, habits, capacities and actions of the animals. To this collection of facts the observations of the conduct of dogs during the present war will yield an extraordinary quantity of new and interesting material.

Wanted—More Half Portions

THE serving to individuals in restaurants, hotels and dining cars of larger portions than can be eaten is often deplored by those who believe in the conservation of our food resources and the wickedness of waste.

Where two may share an order the large portion is desirable, but at many eating places the serving of a single portion to two guests is strictly forbidden. And in the many cases where one is eating alone, to be forced to purchase more than one desires is a source of annoyance rather than of satisfaction.

A move in the right direction has been made by a western railway system in the introduction of half portions in

their dining cars. This so-called "Plate Service" has been well patronized since its inauguration, and bids fair to become extremely popular.

Waste could further be avoided in commercial food, served in dining cars and cafes, by having more simple and better selected menus and better cooking. A "soggy" boiled potato, and pale, watery, tasteless roast beef should be an impossibility instead of all too common. Persons of discrimination and with cultivated food habits want most of all, good, staple foods in reasonable variety, clean, well-cooked and decently served. And these, as any one who has travelled much knows to his sorrow, are often exceedingly hard to obtain at any price.